

CAROLINA ACTION



ISSUE 1, 2025



EVANGELISM IMPACT 2025

Starting the new year with new ideas for soul-winning!

pages 4-5

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN

Zooming Carolina with Prayer

“Zoom!”

Before 2020, I thought of this word as simple onomatopoeia—something that mimicked the sound of a revving car or a racing child.

But since the COVID-19 crisis, it has taken on an entirely new meaning. Zoom has become a household word, a technological marvel of connectivity, saving us thousands of dollars in travel and countless hours with committee meetings, decision-making dialogues, and cherished gatherings with family and friends.

As we entered this year with a heartfelt desire to experience the outpouring of the Latter Rain leading to Pentecost 2025, we began a season of prayer for 10 days across North America. At my

In 2 Kings, we find the story of Elijah's transition to Elisha. As they approached the Jordan River, Elijah struck the water with his mantle, parting it so they could cross on dry ground. Then, in 2 Kings 2:9, Elijah asked his successor what he could do for him before being taken away. Elisha responded, “Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit.”

Elisha wasn't asking for twice as much power as Elijah had. Rather, he sought the inheritance of the firstborn—a spiritual birthright that would equip him to continue Elijah's prophetic ministry. He recognized the weight of his calling and knew that fulfilling it required power beyond his own capabilities.

Seeking a double portion of someone's spirit, as did Elisha, is not inherently wrong. It demonstrates a hunger for God's anointing and a willingness to carry forward the mission of those who have come before us. However, such desires must be approached

blessing. During this Pentecost 2025 season, we in Carolina are praying for a double portion of God's Spirit—to witness a double portion of hearts turned toward heaven. We are asking for a harvest of over 2,000 souls for Christ, building on the momentum of the 1,000+ souls we have seen come to Him in each of the past three years.

Yet, we must remember: God is more interested in a love relationship with us than in what we can do for Him. He walks alongside us, guiding us into His purposes, but it is He who accomplishes the work through us. Jesus is all we need. He is our way. He is our map. When we follow His leadership one day at a time, we will always find ourselves in the center of God's will.

Let's make it our priority to enter into a deeper love relationship with Christ before praying for the outpouring of the Latter Rain. Jesus speaks to us today, saying, “Get to know Me and adjust your life to Me before you proclaim My gospel message.” Take time alone with God each day in this new year—not with a focus on what you need to do next, but simply to enjoy His presence. He will show you the way, for Jesus never fails.

As the timeless hymn reminds us:

Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord;

Abide in Him always, and feed on His Word.

Make friends of God's children, help those who are weak,

Forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek.



home church—Charlotte Sharon Seventh-day Adventist Church—our elders voted to extend this to 30 days of prayer through Zoom gatherings every morning at 8:00 AM and every evening at 7:00 PM.

with humility, integrity, and a heart devoted to serving God and others. That kind of readiness is cultivated through fervent prayer.

When we fold our hands in prayer, God opens His hands in

Your servant leader,

Leslie Louis
Carolina Conference President



I think we should stop trying to grow the church. Now, before you pick up stones—or pick up the phone to call our conference president—let me explain. There are a few reasons why we should stop focusing solely on growing the church.

1. We should stop growing the church if it's only about baptism numbers.

In the Great Commission, Jesus said:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

(Matthew 28:19-20)

Notice that the mission is to *make disciples*—not just to baptize. Baptism is an important step, a public testimony of a new life dependent on Jesus and committed to His truth. But true discipleship goes beyond baptism; it involves training and nurturing new believers so they, in turn, make more disciples. This requires church members to invest in the lives of new converts. Yes, that can be messy—because people are messy—but it is also deeply rewarding.

A disciple of Jesus must develop a daily devotional life, stay connected with Christ, and actively engage in ministry and outreach. None of that happens without intentional effort. If we baptize people without investing in their spiritual growth, we risk committing spiritual neglect—akin to giving birth to a baby and leaving it under a tree. Many who join the church do so at great personal cost, often becoming alienated from family

and friends. Without the church's support, they may end up disconnected both socially and spiritually.

New members need mentorship. Every new disciple should have a

dom growth—especially if it's just transfer growth.

Some churches may never grow beyond a certain size due to their location. For example, congregations



spiritual friend to guide them. Since discipleship is a key goal in the Carolina Conference, we provide churches with discipleship resources. Many have already taken advantage of these tools to strengthen their ministry.

Baptism numbers are encouraging, but numbers don't grow the church—disciples do. And that raises the question: *Is growing the church really our mission?*

2. We should stop trying to grow the church if it's just about our local congregation.

While it's nice to see local church membership, attendance, and giving increase, our true goal is to grow the *Kingdom of God*. Local church growth does not always mean King-

STOP Trying TO GROW THE CHURCH!

dom growth—especially if it's just transfer growth. However, if they are making disciples, they *are* growing the Kingdom. Those disciples will continue their journey elsewhere, carrying the gospel with them.

Scripture does not call us to build mega-churches. Large churches have their advantages, but creating bigger congregations is not our mission—expanding the Kingdom is.

...continued on p. 15.

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EVANGELISM IMPACT 2025

The new year brings fresh opportunities for growth, renewal, and a deeper commitment to sharing the gospel. At Evangelism Impact 2025, attendees came together for a weekend of inspiration and training, ready to embrace innovative ways to reach their communities.

A spirit of revival and mission filled the air as nearly 1,000 attendees gathered at the Sheraton Myrtle Beach Convention Center for Evangelism Impact 2025, marking the event's first time at this venue. From January 2-5, participants from across the Carolinas came together with a shared passion for spreading the gospel and a desire to begin the new year with spiritual purpose.

This year's theme, "Pentecost 2025: Let It Rain", reflected the deep desire for the Holy Spirit to move mightily in the Carolina Con-

ference. The event featured dynamic speakers, engaging seminars, and moments of worship that left attendees energized for the work ahead.

Pastor Ron Halvorsen, Jr., along with Roger Hernandez and Alex Rodriguez, delivered stirring messages emphasizing the urgency of sharing Christ in today's world, with a reminder that we're not just called to share the gospel—we are called to live it.

The Hispanic evangelism meetings took place simultaneously in a separate ballroom. While Spanish-speaking attendees had their own sessions, they joined the general

assembly for key services, including the Sabbath morning worship.

Unfortunately, one of the speakers for the event, Richie Halvorsen, was unable to attend due to illness. However, the conference team quickly rallied, with Pastor Sergio Quevedo, Ministerial Director Haskell Williams, and Evangelism Director Glen Altermatt stepping in to ensure the messages continued uninterrupted. Their adaptability and spirit of service exemplified the very heart of evangelism—being ready to serve wherever needed. Another surprise came on Sunday morning when, during a message



from Quevedo, a fire alarm unexpectedly interrupted the service, prompting attendees to evacuate. Fortunately, the disruption was brief, and the congregation returned with enthusiasm to continue the worship.

One of the most talked-about sessions came from Daniel Hall, whose fresh and innovative approaches to community outreach captivated the audience. “The world is changing, and our methods must evolve to meet people where they are,” Hall shared. His passion for reaching the community in new ways left attendees inspired to think outside the box when it comes to evangelism.

Although the winter temperatures were brisk, the weather remained cold but clear and beautiful, allowing attendees to enjoy stunning views of the ocean from the hotel. The children’s program on Sabbath provided younger attendees with an engaging worship experience of their own, ensuring that the entire family could participate in this

weekend of spiritual renewal.

As the event came to a close, there was a renewed sense of purpose among those who attended. Evangelism Impact 2025 wasn’t just a conference—it was a call to action. With hearts full and spirits

refreshed, attendees left Myrtle Beach ready to carry the fire of evangelism into their communities, setting the stage for a transformative year ahead.

Plan to join us at the same venue next year on Jan. 1-4, 2026!



Photo by Mark Kent

GASTONIA SPANISH COMPANY: A Journey of Faith

On January 18, 2025, members of the Gastonia Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist Church gathered for a special ceremony marking their transition to an organized company. Led by Pastor Ricardo Palacios (pictured right) and Pastor Elias Sandoval, the service was a moment of joy and reflection, celebrating years of dedication and growth.



Photos by Norma Sandoval



The journey began in 2000, when Elias White and his family arrived in Kings Mountain, North Carolina. Finding no Hispanic Adventist church nearby, they attended Shelby Seventh-day Adventist Church and soon felt called to begin Bible studies. As interest grew, studies expanded to several cities, including Gastonia, Shelby, Kings Mountain, and Charlotte.

The first Hispanic baptisms in the

Shelby Church took place in 2002, and as the group expanded, translation headsets and a dedicated meeting space were provided. By 2017, the group had grown to 45 members and was approved to become a company. However, unexpected challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, delayed the

process.

Due to their growth, the Shelby congregation requested that the Hispanic group find a separate location for wor-

ship. Eventually, they were welcomed by Gastonia Church, forming the Kings Mountain Group under Pastor Moises Sauza. Leadership transitioned over time, and in 2023, after an evangelistic campaign, the Kings Mountain and Dallas mission groups merged to form the Gastonia Hispanic Mission Group under Pastor Elias Sandoval.

With steady growth, the request for company status was submitted in June 2024 and approved the following month by the Carolina Conference.

The January 2025 ceremony marked the official recognition of Gastonia Hispanic

Company, a testament to faith, perseverance, and God's leading.

—Norma Sandoval

BLADENBORO SPANISH FELLOWSHIP Becomes a Church

Church planting remains a major focus of the Carolina Conference, with a goal of 90 new church groups, companies, and churches in five years. To transition from a group to a church, congregations must meet membership, leadership, and financial requirements, with final approval from the Conference Executive Committee.

One congregation reaching this milestone is the Bladenboro Spanish Fellowship, originally planted by the Elizabethtown Church. After years of growth, it became an official company in 2015. Now, on January 18, 2024, the fellowship celebrated its transition to full church status.

The well-attended celebration service reflected the congregation's commitment to mission. Gary Moyer and Darryl Bentley were present for this historic occasion. Moyer, vice president for administration, presented a commemorative plaque and a financial

gift from the Carolina Conference to support church expansion or missions. Bentley, associate ministerial director, delivered an encouraging sermon and shared greetings from former Hispanic Ministries Director Samuel Romero and his wife, Mary, who played a key role in the church's early development.

Following the service, members gathered for a fellowship meal, celebrating not only their transition but also God's faithfulness.

From a small group of believers to a fully recognized church, Bladenboro Spanish Church stands as a testament to



perseverance and faith. As the congregation continues its mission, it looks ahead to the next chapter of growth and service in the community.

—by Courtney Herod



Photos by Courtney Herod



Register at www.carolinasda.org

FEATURING:
Philip Samaan
Cesar Perozo
Cara Perozo
John Hudgins
Ignacio Goya

March 28-30, 2025

NOSOCA PINES RANCH

Carolina Conference

**ADULT SABBATH SCHOOL AND
COMMUNITY SERVICES RETREAT**

SOUTHERN STUDENT GIVES BACK TO THE YOUTH OF HER CHURCH

Emma Boughman, member of the Spartanburg Adventist Church and junior character animation major at Southern Adventist University, has been a part of Vacation Bible School (VBS) for as

When Boughman became too old to attend VBS, she still volunteered every year, sometimes at multiple churches each summer. In the summer of 2023, she was astonished to learn that there would be no VBS at her home

sible. The girls recruited volunteers, ordered supplies, crafted decorations, hosted registration, and transformed the church into outer space. More than 60 children attended their program, and even more people volunteered.

event. Back home, she and her best friend Emma Frank covered the stage in sea creatures and created a ten-foot paper mache whale shark. Boughman led the opening and closing ceremonies in her wet-suit, and they had another

“I always love seeing the youth get involved in leadership,” says Don Davis, pastor of the Spartanburg Seventh-day Adventist Church. “Those girls worked so hard. Vacation Bible School is extremely important because it gives children a chance to connect with Jesus during the time when they are most likely to accept Him,



long as she can remember. Her mom hosted VBS for many years, and Boughman would help with small tasks such as cutting out paper decorations and arranging props. She still recalls the excitement she felt watching the week’s theme spring to life all around her.

“I looked forward to VBS every summer,” Boughman says. “I always enjoyed getting to know the crew members, doing crafts, singing songs, and collecting the Bible buddies.”

church in Spartanburg, South Carolina, because no one had volunteered to lead.

“I couldn’t let those kids miss out on an experience that had been so special to me,” Boughman reflects. “I had built up my confidence assisting others over the years. Now it was my turn.”

With only three weeks to plan the event, Boughman and her friends Kaitlyn Whalley, junior accounting major, and Emma Frank, attended, set out to do the impos-

between the ages of 4 and 14.”

In 2024, Boughman decided to lead again with the theme “Scuba.” As a creative person, she saw artistic possibilities in every direction. At Southern, she spent hours in her dorm room planning the

great turnout. Her favorite moment was when a child who had attended both years came up after the program to thank her.

“It might be hard for children to want to get to know God during a sermon at church,” Boughman says, “but it’s different when a program designed specifically for them shows how fun a relationship with God can be. It helps them want to know Jesus and to understand that they have a church family that cares about them specifically.”

—by Angela Baerg

Photos contributed

The “Walking Every Day with Jesus” Congress took place on Saturday, January 25, at the Hispanic Adventist Church in West Charlotte, North Carolina, welcoming more than 130 juniors for a full day of spiritual growth and dynamic activities. The event, designed for youth ages 8 to 14, aimed to deepen their personal relationship with Jesus through engaging sessions tailored specifically to their age group.

Months before the event, leaders and volunteers considered how to inspire juniors to develop a stronger spiritual connection. After much prayer, the idea of a one-day congress was formed—a special event with activities designed to motivate young people to spend meaningful time alone with Christ. When the plan was presented to pastors and volunteer coordinators, they embraced the vision wholeheartedly, believing it would be a blessing for their congregations.

With strong support from the district, preparations quickly began. Registration opened, and Hispanic congregations across the conference responded with enthusiasm. Limited space caused spots to fill quickly, confirming the eagerness for such an event. A simultaneous program was also prepared for family members of the young attendees.

The congress featured Pastor Alexandria Hatter from the Florida Conference as the keynote speaker, presenting motivational messages that encouraged the juniors to cultivate a daily connection with Jesus. The Carolina Conference youth director delivered an inspiring message, while Children’s Ministries Director Kathy Russell shared words of encouragement. Other conference leaders, including Treasurer Pastor Rick Russell, Hispanic Ministries Coordinator Pastor Ricardo Palacios, and Local Church Pastor Elias Sandoval, attended to support the event.

Throughout the day, the presence of the Holy Spirit was evident as participants engaged in interactive activities such as

dramas, songs, and symbolic moments where they dedicated their hearts to Jesus. A specially prepared lunch provided time for fellowship, and the group photo became a cherished moment.

Meanwhile, family members attended afternoon seminars led by psychologist Ximena Gilbert, who provided valuable insights on strengthening faith within the home.

their lives.

The success of the congress was made possible by the dedicated team of volunteers who worked tirelessly to create an experience that would inspire young people to make Jesus their best friend. With excitement for future gatherings already growing, the mission remains clear—to continue guiding young hearts toward Christ.



Photos by Rebecca Carpenter

As the event concluded, each junior received a bag filled with books and motivational materials, along with a congress T-shirt and a small figurine of Jesus to remind them to always keep Him first in

—by *Yudith Flores*, assistant to the Children’s Ministries Director

Kids Experience a POWERFUL ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS at “Walking Every Day with Jesus” Congress

LITTLE CREEK HISPANIC CHURCH ORGANIZED A Bilingual Celebration

The Little Creek Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist Church was officially organized on Dec. 14, 2024, in a special bilingual celebration attended by members of both the Spanish and English congregations. The event marked the culmination of years of missionary efforts and church growth, as the company officially transitioned to church status under the Carolina Conference.

Elders Leslie Louis, Carolina Conference president, and Gary Moyer, conference vice president for administration, participated in the service, with Louis preaching the sermon. The worship program was conducted in both Spanish and English, emphasizing the unity and shared mission of the two congregations. Following the service, members and guests gathered for a fellowship meal, featuring a special cake commemorating the occasion.

The journey of the Little Creek Hispanic Church began in 2015 when a family, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, felt the call to establish a Hispanic ministry in Clayton, N.C. Upon discovering Little Creek Fellowship Church just ten minutes from their home, they joined the congregation in April 2016. With the support of Pastor Sinclair, Brother Dan Stewart, and other church elders, they were granted permission to meet in the fellowship hall in July 2016. That Sabbath, seven individuals, including the Peña family and Brother Pablo Delgado, gathered to worship.

As the group grew, the Marmolejos family from Clayton and the Reyes family from Garner joined. Early missionary efforts included distributing literature in Hispanic stores and preparing food baskets for families in need. With support from the American brethren at Little Creek, the group became more in-



Photos by Courtney Herold

involved in church life, always promoting unity and service.

Pastoral leadership played a crucial role in the church's development. Pastor José Laporte Jr. was appointed by the Carolina Conference to shepherd the group, leading to the first baptisms on March 10, 2018. Over the years, membership expanded through transfers, evangelistic outreach, and mission efforts. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, the church remained active, holding virtual services that resulted in baptisms in Colombia, El Salvador, Burlington, NC, and Mexico.

On April 1, 2023, the group was officially recognized as a company under the Carolina Conference. Under the leadership of David Hubiera and with the support of Pastor Laporte, the church con-



tinued to thrive. The arrival of Pastor Alejandro Barrios in June 2024 reignited the missionary spirit, bringing over 20 new members to Christ in just six months. After much prayer, a delegation, accompanied by Pastor Barrios, attended an interview at the Carolina Conference office on Oct. 24, 2024, to

finalize the transition to full church status.

Now recognized as Little Creek Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist Church,

the congregation consists of 84 members registered with the Carolina Conference. The words of Acts 2:47—*“And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”*—continue to be fulfilled as the church remains committed to its mission of sharing the gospel and serving the community.

—Article Contributed

HOPE *Beyond* TOMORROW

LAKE JUNALUSKA CAMP MEETING
MAY 25 -31, 2025

SPEAKERS:

Sunday-Thursday Evening — Jerry Page
Friday Evening and Sabbath Morning — Shawn Boonstra
Saturday Evening — Leslie Louis
8:30am Monday-Friday — Various Speakers
11:00am Monday-Friday — Roy Gane

MUSICAL GUEST:

Matt & Josie Minkus

SEMINARS:

Apologetics Seminar — Brad Cauley
Disasters: The Before
and After — Jim Ingersoll
Family Ministries — Cesar & Carolann de Leon
Generous Living — Rudy & Janet Salazar
Health — Roman Pawlak
Men's Ministry — Tony LaPorte
Outreach/Evangelism — Richie Halversen
Prayer Ministry — Rick & Cindy Mercer
Singles Seminar — Ricardo Carr

FOR RESERVATIONS AT LAKE JUNALUSKA CALL: **1-800-222-4930**



Page



Boonstra



Louis



Gane



Minkus



THE LITTLE CHURCH THAT COULD A MIRACLE STORY

It was a Sabbath like no other for the members of the Shannon Seventh-day Adventist Church in Shannon, North Carolina. This small town, just south of Fayetteville, witnessed a momentous occasion on Sabbath, February 8, as its faithful Spanish-speaking believers officially organized as a church under the Carolina Conference.

Their journey began during the pandemic when ten humble individuals—field and construction workers—gathered around a table to pray for God’s guidance in growing a church. They worshiped and prayed throughout the day, and by the end of their gathering, they had collected \$2,800.

With those funds, they purchased a large tent, chairs, and materials to reinforce the structure. They built a platform, bought Bibles and literature, and on Friday evening, July 16, 2021, held their first service in what became known as their “Tent Church.”

Through hot summer days and bitter winter months, they continued to worship in their makeshift church. Despite their efforts, securing a rental space in Shannon proved nearly impossible. Then, in October 2022, Hurricane Ian swept through, destroying nearly everything—except, as church member Marilyn Nater recalls, their “humble platform that was built for us to preach.”

Amazingly, the same week they lost their tent, they found a new meeting place in a member’s home.

“The Holy Spirit worked in so many hearts, and without us even asking, we started receiving love offerings and donations from brothers and sisters, friends, and district churches,” Marilyn shared.

Through community events, door-to-door literature distribution, and simple invitations to worship, their congregation continued to grow. Before long, they were able to purchase four acres of land. Then, on February 24, 2024, Elder Richard Russell, Carolina Con-



The singing group Alabanzas al Cordero, (Praises to the Lamb), from the St. Paul Hispanic Adventist church provided special music.

ference Treasurer, joined them as they broke ground for their new church.

“What began in 2021 as a small group of ten faithful worshipers gathered around a table has now grown into a thriving congregation of 60 members. Their mission is clear—to be a beacon of light to the cities of Shannon, Lumber Ridge, and Hope Mills. Yet, they are the first to proclaim, ‘All the credit goes to Almighty God.’ They truly are ‘The Little Church That Could.’”

—by Ron Quick



Elder Rick Russell, Carolina Conference VP of Finance, presents a special plaque to Pastor Josue Cruz, Shannon Spanish Church pastor

Photos by Ron Quick

AN UNFORGETTABLE JOURNEY

THE MPA SOPHOMORE CLASS ADVENTURE TO OHIO



Photos contributed

On Sunday, we left Pisgah around 9:30 in the morning, excited to begin our trip. Along the way, we made a few stops at gas stations, and the highlight was definitely Buc-ee's. We stocked up on snacks and grabbed some fun souvenirs. The drive to Ohio was a blast! The boys sang karaoke with Dean Nash, while the girls chatted, sang along to music, and enjoyed spending time with Ms. S. We arrived at the hotel around 5:00 in the evening and were greeted by our friends from Tri-City Christian Academy (TCA) with hugs and laughter. That night, we all gathered around the fire pit for a special worship session. Later, we practiced acrobatics, played volleyball and basketball, caught up with old friends, and played games with Mr. Klein, our biology teacher. By 10:30, everyone was ready to call it a night.

On Monday, we woke up at 8:00 and enjoyed breakfast before Valerie, our class pastor, led worship. Afterward, we headed to the Cincinnati Zoo, which was incredible. The zoo's layout was beautiful, and the sunny weather made the animals active and easy to spot. We split into boys' and girls' groups to explore. Lunch at the zoo's restaurant was delicious. Afterward, we treated ourselves to funnel cakes and continued exploring.

We saw monkeys, lions, and giraffes. Some of the girls even got to feed the giraffes by hand, which was so cool! Seeing all the animals reminded us of how creative God is in designing each one so uniquely.

After the zoo, we returned to the hotel to get ready for dinner at Olive Garden, which felt like a fancy treat for students. Everyone left stuffed, but we still made room for their signature mint chocolates! Back at the hotel, we relaxed and enjoyed another worship session before winding down for bed at 10:30.

Tuesday started with breakfast and a worship session led by TCA's class pastor. By 9:00, we were on our way to visit the Ark Encounter. Even from the parking lot, the ark was breathtakingly huge. A shuttle bus took us up to the entrance, and we took a ton of photos with both our class and TCA's class. Inside, we explored life-sized replicas of animal cages and exhibits depicting Noah, his family, and their daily lives. The second floor showcased the six days of creation through detailed timelines and artwork. Outside, there was a small petting zoo where we got to interact with goats, which were adorable. Many of us also visited the gift shop to pick up souvenirs like keychains, fudge, and hot chocolate. On our way out, Mr. Klein

found a mouse in the road, caught it in a cup, and used it to prank us—it was hilarious!

After a lunch break, we headed to the Newport Aquarium. The entrance featured a massive turtle statue, and inside, we saw an amazing variety of fish, from ugly to beautiful, and big to tiny. The jellyfish exhibit was mesmerizing, and we even got to touch sea urchins and starfish. The highlight was a giant net suspended over a shark pool, which was a little scary at first but so much fun once we got used to it. For dinner, we went to a Mexican restaurant, where the bean burritos, enchiladas, and quesadillas were the most popular choices. Back at the hotel, we wrapped up the night with worship and some relaxing hangout time before going to bed around 10:30.

Wednesday, our final day, was more relaxed. We got to sleep in, had breakfast at 9:00, and were on the buses with our luggage by 10:00. The ride home was much calmer since everyone was pretty tired. We made a few stops—including Buc-ee's again—before finally arriving back at Pisgah.

This trip was such an amazing experience. It's one we'll never forget, and the sophomore class of 2027 will always treasure these special memories.

—by Natalia Quevedo, Class of 2027

iMPAct

CAROLINA CONFERENCE YOUTH RALLY HOSTS OVER 100 YOUTH

From November 1-3, Mount Pisgah Academy was alive with the spirit of worship and service as over 100 youth from across the Carolina Conference joined the student body for the iMPAct Youth Rally. This dynamic weekend provided an inspiring opportunity for young people to connect, build relationships, and grow in their faith.

Engage Ministries from



Photos contributed



Southern Adventist University led worship with uplifting and soul-stirring music, creating an atmosphere of praise and anticipation. Pastor Ron Sydney, from Southern California, delivered impactful messages centered on the theme “Only Jesus.” His words encouraged attendees to deepen their reliance on Jesus in every aspect of

their lives.

In addition to spiritually enriching main sessions, students participated in service projects throughout the community. Many volunteers traveled to Swannanoa, a community still

recovering from the effects of Hurricane Helene, where they assisted with cleanup efforts, providing much-needed relief. Another group visited Downtown Asheville, sharing copies of *The Great Controversy*, planting seeds of hope, and demonstrating God’s love through personal connections.

The weekend concluded with the annual Fall Festival, a vibrant event organized by student classes featuring food, drinks, and activities. The festival provided an opportunity for attendees to relax, enjoy fellowship, and support their peers.

Hosting the iMPAct Youth Rally was a true blessing, and the school was thrilled to see so many visitors experience the love and warmth of its campus family. Everyone is invited to mark their calendars and join iMPAct 2025, a weekend sure to inspire, empower, and ignite the hearts of youth across the region.

—by Abby Ackerman

STOP Trying TO GROW THE CHURCH! ...continued from p. 3.

Many people find smaller churches more personal, making it easier to form meaningful relationships. In larger churches, unless small groups are intentionally cultivated, people can easily feel lost. While some prefer mega-churches because they don’t want to be noticed, the truth is, every believer needs to be part of a caring spiritual family to stay connected with Jesus.

Larger churches also face the risk of becoming institutionalized—where services shift from being worship experiences to performances. Some suggest that once a church reaches 150-200 members, it may be more effective to plant a new church rather than continue expanding. Interestingly, in places like

China, hundreds of thousands of disciples are being nurtured in underground house churches rather than in massive congregations.

Again, the growth God seeks is *Kingdom growth*, and that is achieved through disciple-making.

3. We should stop trying to grow the church if it’s just about growing our tribe.

Truth be told, many of us are naturally more comfortable around people who look like us, speak our language, share our customs, and think as we do. But Jesus commanded us to “*make disciples of all nations.*” Why? Because He loves *all people equally*, regardless of background, ethnicity, or culture. “*For God*

so loved the world...” (John 3:16)

Jesus stood out in His culture because His compassion compelled Him to minister to *everyone*—even those whom the religious elite avoided. Revelation 14:6 reminds us that the everlasting gospel is for “*every nation, tribe, tongue, and people.*” That is the mission we are called to fulfill in His strength until He returns.

And I believe He is returning soon! So rather than focusing on just gaining baptisms, growing our local churches, or increasing our tribe, let’s commit to making disciples for the Kingdom—disciples who are prepared for the King’s return.

Will you join me?

—Gary Moyer, VP of Administration

Carolina Obituaries

CULVER, ELIZABETH ANN SWAYGER, 82, born June 25, 1942, in Hot Springs, AR, died December 3, 2024, in Hendersonville, NC. She was a member of the Fletcher Adventist Church. Culver graduated from Southwest Junior College in Texas and earned her bachelor's degree from Union College in Lincoln, NE. She later obtained a master's degree in public health from Loma Linda University in California. She worked as a full-time teacher while her husband, Don, was in medical training in California. Culver was also a former member of the Foundation Board of AdventHealth. She was preceded in death by her parents, Edward and Selma Belding Swayger. She is survived by her husband of 61 years, Donald Culver, MD; sons, Mark Culver of Hendersonville, NC, and Monte Culver of Dayton, OH.

FLOYD, CAROLYN VIRGINIA SMITH, 96, born October 1, 1928, in Coward, SC, died January 8, 2025, in Hendersonville, NC. She was the eldest child of Hoyt and Leola Smith and was raised in a Christian home alongside her three siblings. In 1947, Carolyn married Paul Floyd, and they lived in Olanta, SC, for their entire marriage until his death in 2005. Their 58-year union was blessed with three children. Carolyn dedicated herself to raising her children and later worked as a school secretary at Olanta High School. After retiring, she and Paul started a successful home-based plant business, The Flower Patch, which attracted customers from miles around. In 2011, Carolyn moved to Fletcher Park Inn in Hendersonville, NC, where she made many friends and became an active member of the Fletcher Adventist Church, never missing a Sabbath service. She also became involved in the community and cherished the fellowship. Carolyn was known for her deep Christian faith, attending every religious meeting available to her. She wrote monthly letters to each grandchild, encouraging them in their Christian walk. In her later years, despite declining vision, she continued to read her Bible with a magnifying glass and prayed diligently for her family and fellow residents. She walked the halls of Fletcher Park Inn, praying for those in need. She is survived by her children: Paula White (Reese), Patsy McCutcheon (Jim), and Phil Floyd (Cheryl); her siblings; eight grandchildren; sixteen great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandson.

LARRABEE, VIOLET, 93, born December 23, 1930, in Austin, MN, died Novem-

ber 6, 2024, in McDonald, TN. She was a member of the Fletcher Adventist Church. Larrabee was the daughter of Polish immigrant John Kereluk and Austrian immigrant Mary Kereluk. After her mother's death, she was raised by her sister, Anna Babb. She graduated as valedictorian of the class of 1949 from Maplewood Academy in Minnesota and earned her BSN in 1953 at Loma Linda, CA. In 1954, she married Lawrence G. Larrabee. They lived in 13 different communities, with Maine being a favorite. Larrabee excelled as a nurse and later worked as an office nurse in a pediatrician's office in Maine, where she was deeply appreciated. Her Bible and prayer life sustained her, and Psalm 103 was her favorite chapter. She will be remembered fondly by her family and friends. She is survived by her children, Jon (Lisa) Larrabee, Clark (Jeannie) Larrabee, and Jodi (Michael) Brewer; three grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

PETERSON, LAURELL MARCINE, 88, born January 17, 1936, in Hutchinson, MN, died December 21, 2024, in Henderson County, NC. She was a member of the Fletcher Adventist Church. Peterson attended the Adventist church school in Hutchinson and graduated from Maplewood Academy. In 1958, she earned a degree in theology from Union College in Lincoln, NE. She served the Adventist Church for over 40 years as a teacher, secretary, and later as associate director in the Sabbath School Department at the General Conference. As a teenager, Peterson learned to play the clarinet and participated in the band at Maplewood Academy and the orchestra at Union College. While in Maryland, she played in the General Conference orchestra, where she met a young Teddy Wilson, later president of the denomination. Peterson and her longtime friend, Martha Lunt, traveled extensively, visiting all 50 states, six continents, and many countries, with Hawaii being a favorite destination. She moved to North Carolina in 1999. She was preceded in death by her parents, Edwin and Gladys Peterson, and her sister, Ladelle. She is survived by her nieces, Julie and Shelly; nephews, Marlon and Galen; and cousins, Gary, Virginia, and Jewel.

REDDEN, CLIFTON M., 85, born February 8, 1939, in Stearns, KY, died December 3, 2024, in Hendersonville, NC. He completed the electrician program at Ford Motor Company with the first known 4.0 GPA, qualifying him to work as an industrial electrician at Ford for 36 years. Clifton worked

hard to put all five of his children through Adventist church schools, which he considered his best investment. He also built and flew three airplanes. He was preceded in death by his parents, Lolan and Marjorie Redden; his wife of 59 years, Anita F. Redden; and his son, Clifton M. Redden Jr. He is survived by his children, Deborah (Samuel), Ron (Vicki), Don (Kristen), and Barbara (Stanley); 15 grandchildren; and 5 great-grandchildren.

SANDBORN, MARIE A., 85, born July 22, 1939, died February 15, 2025, in Hendersonville, NC. She was married to Dr. William Sandborn for over 65 years and leaves to mourn her husband and three children. Marie was a devoted member of the Fletcher Adventist Church and taught Sabbath School for children and young adults in several churches throughout the years. She was a registered nurse, graduating from Madison College in Madison, TN. Known for developing her yard into a botanical garden and excelling in art, Marie's faith in her Savior was unwavering. As she said, "I want to go to heaven and walk with Jesus."

Carolina Conference Calendar

MARCH

Using AI Effectively in Ministry: 23 — Carolina Conference

Adult Sabbath School/Community Services Retreat: 28-30 — NPR

APRIL

Adventurer Fun Day 1: 13 — NPR

MPA Alumni Weekend: 18-19 — Mount Pisgah Academy (MPA)

Adventurer Fun Day 2: 20 — NPR

Master Guide Campout: 25-27 — Low Country

MAY

Carolina Conference Camp Meeting: 25-31 — NPR

JUNE

Family Camp: 1-7 — NPR

Junior Camp: 8-14 — NPR

Tween Camp: 15-21 — NPR

Teen Camp: 22-28 — NPR

JULY

Aquatics Camp: 6-12 — NPR

Horsemanship Camp: 13-19 — NPR

BMX Camp: 20-26 — NPR

AUGUST

Women's Ministries Retreat: 9-11 — NPR

Adventurer Leadership Conference: 23-25 — NPR

MORE EVENTS AT WWW.CAROLINASDA.ORG

The Carolina Action

Carolina Conference of
Seventh-day Adventists
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- 96% of parents agree that the educational program offered at MPA is high quality.
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